



USAID | BENIN

Solicitation No.: PSC 680-06-012

Issuance Date: May 2, 2006

Closing Date: June 1, 2006

Ladies and Gentlemen:

SUBJECT: Solicitation for a Personal Services Contractor (PSC) – Basic Education Team Leader, USAID/Benin

USAID/BENIN is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage all qualified candidates to apply. Persons with disabilities will be assisted and receive reasonable accommodation.

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Benin is seeking applications (Optional Form 612 or Standard Form 171) from qualified US citizens, resident aliens, or Third Country Nationals (TCNs), interested in providing the services described below.

Submissions shall be in accordance with the attached information and required forms at the time and place specified.

Any questions on this solicitation may be directed to:

Cosmas APEDO, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
USAID/Benin
Phone (229) 21-30 05 00
Email: capedo@usaid.gov

and a copy to

Rosalind Sika, Contracting Officer
USAID/Benin

Phone: 229 21-30-05-00
Email: rsika@usaid.gov

Applications may be submitted by means of mail, or e-mail.

Mailing address:

USAID/Benin
Office of Procurement
Rue Caporal Anani
American Embassy
01 BP 2012
Cotonou, Republic of Benin

E-mail address: capedo@usaid.gov

N.B.: Mark submissions "PSC 680-06-012". Late applications will not be accepted. Applicants are requested to provide their full mailing address and contact information (including fax, telephone and/or e-mail where available).

Application forms: Optional Form 612 or Standard Form 171 can be obtained from the USAID website http://www.usaid.gov/procurement_bus_opp/procurement/forms or at federal offices.

USAID/Benin anticipates awarding one (1) U.S. PSC or a TCN contract as a result of this solicitation. USAID/Benin reserves the right not to award any contract as a result of this solicitation.

Applicants should retain for their record copies of all enclosures that accompany their proposals. Please reference the number of this solicitation when sending your application. Submissions made via e-mail MUST be Word 98 or Word 2000 or pdf format.

Sincerely,

SOLICITATION INFORMATION

1. SOLICITATION NUMBER: PSC 680-06-012
2. ISSUANCE DATE: May 2, 2006
3. CLOSING DATE: June 1, 2006 12:00 noon Local Time
4. POSITION TITLE: Basic Education Team Leader
5. MARKET VALUE: The position is the equivalent of a GS-14, with salary ranging from \$77,793 to \$101,130 per annum. Final compensation will be based on individual's salary and work history, experience and educational background.
6. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: 24 months from effective date of Contract with possible extension for two additional years.
7. PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Cotonou, Republic of Benin
8. SUPERVISION: USAID/Benin Mission Director.
9. AREA OF CONSIDERATION: U.S. Citizens, Resident alien, or TCN

I. POSITION: BASIC EDUCATION TEAM LEADER

A. BACKGROUND

USAID/Benin, a sustainable development mission, is staffed with four US Direct Hire Foreign Service Officers, one USPSC, and 54 Beninese nationals. The USAID/Benin program, with an annual program budget of \$16 million, includes strategic objectives in education, health, and a special objective in governance. The Mission also has a P.L. 480 Title II food aid program which supports interventions in primary education, maternal and child health, agriculture, child trafficking, and micro-finance.

Education is a critical sector for sustained economic growth, improved health (including fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS), and continued democratization. In the early 1990s the deterioration of Benin's primary education system was evidenced by low primary school gross enrollment rates; lack of qualified teachers; lack of school infrastructure, equipment, and pedagogical materials; and mismanagement of financial resources. To improve the quality and relevancy of primary education in Benin, the Government of Benin embarked in the early 1990s on a reform of the primary education system. The purpose of the education reform is to prepare citizens to contribute to Benin's developing democracy and provide skills in key subject areas, such as math and French, along with a capacity for critical thinking and a sense of social responsibility.

Over the past 15 years the Government of Benin has worked in partnership with USAID and other donors to improve primary education. The gross primary school enrollment rate increased from 73% in 1997 to 97% in 2005. Girls' gross enrollment rate increased from 56% in 1997 to 86% in 2005. USAID assistance was instrumental in developing a new competency-based curriculum which places greater emphasis on analysis and critical thinking instead of rote memory. The revised curriculum has been introduced nationwide from the first through the sixth grade. USAID-funded training and advocacy activities have increased parent's awareness of the need for sending girls to school. HIV/AIDS education has been included in parent and teacher training activities and in student textbooks. USAID's Africa Education Initiative resources were used to train teachers, develop supplemental education materials for first grade children, and provide scholarships to more than 900 girls through the Ambassadors Girls Scholarship Program.

Benin faces challenges in improving the efficiency of its primary education school system. The country is unable to fund its education system at the level required to hit the Millennium Challenge Goal of

U.S. Agency for International Development

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education for all by 2015. Its teacher training colleges were closed for 17 years with only three teacher training colleges opened in January of 2006. It has a shortage of 6,000 teachers. Among its 26,000 teachers, only 5,000 are women and at least 10,000 are untrained and unqualified. Teacher salaries are low, living and working conditions are poor, and pedagogical support is weak. The concentration of female teachers in Cotonou and secondary towns further aggravates the shortage of female teachers in rural areas and northern Benin where girls' enrollment is lower than the national average. There is a corruption in the education system, weak school supervision and administration, and an unhealthy politicization of the decision-making process. And lastly, civil society participation in the management of school system is weak and limits the transparency and accountability at the national and local levels.

B. USAID BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

USAID's education program is designed to improve the quality of and access to basic education in the primary schools. Specific areas of emphasis include support for the primary education reform, teacher training, textbook development and production, interventions to increase girl's enrollment and retention, enhanced community participation involving parents and teachers, and improved awareness among teachers and students about HIV/AIDS. Technical assistance has also been provided to improve School inspection and supervision and planning and administration at the central level of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

The Mission's Basic Education Strategic Objective is valued at approximately \$25 million, and for the past 2 years, has had an annual budget of approximately \$5 million. Basic education resources have been complemented by an annual \$4 million P.L 480 Title II for food distribution which supports school feeding and other activities related to primary education. This activity will end in September 2006. The Mission's Basic Education program currently consists of two pedagogy activities and in the next year will be developing two additional new activities in the area of girls' education/community participation and educational reform.

II. DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POSITION

The incumbent shall report directly to the Mission Director and shall serve as the Team Leader for the Basic Education Team (BET). S/he shall provide direction for the basic education program, oversee the design and implementation of BET activities, monitor progress toward planned results, ensure accountability for USAID resources, and supervise the BET staff of three professionals and an administrative assistant. The BET Team Leader will develop and negotiate an annual work plan with the Mission Director who will evaluate his/her performance annually. More specifically, the BET Team Leader shall perform the following:

Technical Oversight:

- Serve as the principal education advisor to USAID/Benin;
- Provide guidance to Cognizant Technical Officers (CTO) in managing activities under the Mission's education program;
- Monitor and strengthen the BET Performance Management Plan ;
- Monitor and evaluate BET education activities, including assessing progress and technical assistance requirements;
- Lead and coordinate the design of new activities;
- Provide assistance to the Family Health Team to maximize the collaboration and synergy between the two teams to promote health awareness and better health practices;
- Lead and coordinate the activities of the Education Sector Donor Group which is chaired by USAID/Benin.

Team Development and Supervisory Functions:

- Direct team development and supervision, including development of staff work objectives;
- Provide guidance and feedback to employees, and prepare annual evaluations;
- Provide training to BET staff in technical areas, ensure that BET staff understands and follows USAID regulations, and improve the competency of the BET staff;
- Maintain close contact with education specialists in USAID/Washington and education teams in other USAID missions to exchange information ensure that USAID/Benin's program reflects Agency best practices;
- Follow and interpret USAID budget, program, and procurement guidance to ensure that the BET program is in compliance with USAID policies;
- Perform other specific duties as assigned by the Mission Director.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Plan and initiate periodic evaluations and semi-annual reviews of projects;
- Monitor policy development and implementation by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and donors to assess the environment for implementing basic education activities;
- Ensure that regular field trips are taken to monitor activity implementation and assess the effectiveness of USAID interventions;
- Develop and implement the Performance Management Plan for the Basic Education Strategic Objective, ensuring the establishment of appropriate indicators and data and the availability of reliable data;

Strengthening Relationships with Partners:

- Promote good relations with and provide technical oversight to USAID's implementing partners (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, contractors, grantees, cooperating agencies, other donors and local Beninese NGOs) in education;
- Oversee USAID's role as the lead donor in the education sector and maximize the collaboration among education donors;
- Develop and execute a strategy to assist the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to qualify for the donor-supported Fast Track Initiative– Education for All program.
- Ensure that proposed new activities conform to the Mission's approved strategy;
- Ensure that USAID partners understand USAID narrative and financial reporting requirements and are able to meet Mission reporting standards;
- Ensure that USAID partners collect critical information for use in USAID/Benin progress reports to USAID/Washington.

III. REPORTS AND WORK PLANS:

Within 45 days of signing the contract, the contractor will prepare a work plan and work objectives for the first year of the contract.

IV. PERIOD OF SERVICE TO USAID/BENIN, SECURITY AND MEDICAL CLEARANCE:

The Contractor's period of service shall be approximately two years from the effective date of the contract with a possibility of renewal for two additional years. Extensions will be contingent on availability of funds and USAID approval. The individual needs to obtain a US State Department Security Clearance, a medical clearance from State M/MED, and be willing and able to spend as much as 20% of his/her time traveling.

V. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

1. Education: 10 points

A minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Education or related field. A Master's Degree in Education or related field is preferable.

2. Experience: 45 points

Applicants that hold a bachelor's Degree must have a minimum of seven (7) years of experience with progressive responsibility working in developing countries in the management and implementation of education activities, including experience in strategic planning and education program design, program planning and budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation. Applicants should have professional experience which demonstrates experience in leading teams, sensitivity to socio cultural aspects bearing on education and ability to deal with government officials at all levels.

Applicants that hold a Master's Degree must have a minimum of five (5) years of experience working in developing countries in the management and implementation of education activities, including experience in strategic planning and education program design, program planning and budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation. Applicants should have professional experience which demonstrates experience in leading teams, sensitivity to socio cultural aspects bearing on education and ability to deal with government officials at all levels.

3. Skills: 45 points

Fluency in English: (20 points) Applicants must have a minimum of full professional proficiency in English, including an ability to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. This means that s/he 1) can understand and participate in any conversations within the range of own personal and professional experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary; 2) would rarely be taken for a native speaker, but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations; 3) makes only quite rare and unpatterned errors of pronunciation and grammar; and 4) can handle informal interpreting from and into the language. English skills at the ability of native or bilingual proficiency are preferred.

Fluency in French: (10 points) Applicants must have a minimum professional working proficiency in French. This includes 1) ability to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics ; 2) ability to discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease ; 3) complete comprehension for a normal rate of speech; 4) a general vocabulary which is broad enough that he or she rarely has to grope for a word ; 5) an accent which may be obviously foreign, but has a good control of grammar; and

errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker. This also includes an ability to read at a normal speed and with almost complete comprehension of a variety of authentic prose material on unfamiliar subjects and ability to write simple documents.

Interpersonal Skills: (10 points) Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate and work effectively in a team and manage conflict.)

Computer skills: (5 points) Proficiency in Windows 2000, MS Word, Excel, etc

VI. SUPERVISION:

Supervision Received: The Basic Education Team Leader will work under the direction of the Mission Director.

Supervision over Others: Basic Education Team staff

VII. APPLYING

Consideration and selection will be based on panel evaluation of the Minimum Qualifications and Evaluation Factors. Applicants are encouraged to write a brief appendix to a resume, OF-612 or SF-171 to demonstrate how their previous experience and skills are suited for this position. Applicants must provide names and contact information for at least two references. The highest ranking applicants will be interviewed by phone.

VIII. COMPENSATION

The term of the contract will be for two (2) years. The position has been classified at a GS-14 level. The actual salary of the successful candidate will be negotiated within that range depending on qualification and previous earning history.

AS A MATTER OF POLICY, AND AS APPROPRIATE, A PSC IS NORMALLY AUTHORIZED THE FOLLOWING:

Benefits

1. Employee's FICA contribution*
2. Contribution toward Health and Life Insurance
3. Pay Comparability Adjustment
4. Annual Salary Increase
5. Annual and Sick Leave.
6. Access to Embassy medical facilities, and pouch mail service (Department of State approval required)
7. Eligible for Worker's Compensation (USPSC only)
8. Shipment and storage of household effects
9. Shipment of POV (Private Own Vehicle)
10. Consumables allowance (USPSC only)
11. Defense-based Accreditation and Medivac insurance

**Note: If a US citizen, the contractor's salary will be subject to employee's FICA and Medicare contribution.*

Allowances: (If applicable, as found in the Standardized Regulations Government Civilian Foreign Areas) Sections cited below)

1. Temporary Lodging Allowance (Section 120)
2. Living Quarters Allowance (Section 130)
3. Post Allowance (Section 220)
4. Supplemental Post Allowance (Section 230)
5. Separate Maintenance Allowance (Section 260)
6. Education Allowance (Section 270)
7. Post Differential (Chapter 500)
8. Payments during Evacuation/Authorized Departure (Section 600)
9. Danger Pay (Section 650)
10. Educational Travel
11. Cola

IX. CONTRACT INFORMATION BULLETINS (CIBs) OR ACQUISITION AND ASSISTANCE POLICY DIRECTIVES (AAPDs) PERTAINING TO PSCs.

AAPDs/CIBs contain changes to USAID policy and General Provisions in USAID regulations and contracts. Please refer to this website

http://www.usaid.gov/procurement_bus_opp/procurement/cib/subject.html to determine which AAPDs/CIBs apply to this contract.

X. LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS FOR PSCs

1. Standard Form 171 or Optional Form 612*
2. Contractor Physical Examination For children 11 years and under (DS-1622)**
3. Contractor Physical Examination For children 12 years and over (DS-1843)**
4. Questionnaire for National Security Positions (SF-86)**,
5. Authority for Release of Information (AID 610-14)**
6. Foreign Residence Data (AID 6-85)**
7. Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970, As Amended**
8. Notice Required by The Privacy Act of 1974 **
9. Fingerprint Cards (FD-258)**.

* Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians Foreign Areas)

** The forms listed 2 through 9 shall only be completed upon the advice of the Contracting Officer that an applicant is the successful candidate for the job.